US Highway 93 Access Management Study: Milepost 17 to State Route 68 Interchange

ADOT and Mohave County are partnering to conduct an Access Management Study to assess future access points on US Highway 93. The goal of the study is to successfully balance the roadway operational needs with adjacent land development needs. This study will focus on developing long-range strategies that will balance these needs to preserve the operational integrity of US 93. The study will cover US 93 from the beginning of the four-lane divided highway section at Milepost 17 to the traffic interchange with State Route 68 at Milepost 68.

The final result of this study will include a plan to implement access-control strategies for the existing four-lane divided highway to maintain the roadway as a high-speed, high-capacity facility for travel and commerce. The ultimate plan also will account for a full access-controlled facility designed to interstate highway standards. Future traffic interchange locations and the transportation right-of-way that will be needed for construction will be identified in the study.
Two public meetings were held in January 2003 to present preliminary access-control management alternatives.

Public input from these meetings, along with information gathered during stakeholder interviews, will be used to further refine and/or revise the alternatives. The refined alternatives and a recommended final access-control management plan will be presented at a second round of public open houses in the summer of 2003.

Hoover Dam Bypass Project Construction Update

With the design now completed, construction has begun on the Hoover Dam Bypass. The project has been awarded to both R.E. Monks Construction and Vastco Incorporated. The project referred to as the "Arizona Approach" is the roadway leading from Arizona US 93 to the new Colorado River bridge crossing, which is approximately 1,500 feet downstream of the Hoover Dam. There will be 1.8 miles of four-lane roadway divided by a concrete median constructed for the Arizona Approach. The project plans also call for drainage improvements and staining of newly exposed rock. Proposed construction also includes grade separation structures and wildlife crossings. In addition, a number of power line towers will be relocated to make way for the new highway. In a later phase, a 900-foot canyon crossing bridge, named the Sugarloaf Mountain Bridge, will be erected and will span the canyon to the east side of Sugarloaf Mountain.

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Arizona Department of Transportation
US Highway 93 Improvements

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Improvements to US Highway 93: Hoover Dam to Milepost 17

The Federal Highway Administration and the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) are studying possible alternatives for improving US Highway 93 beginning at milepost (MP) 2.5, just south of Hoover Dam. The study area will begin at the connection with the Hoover Dam Bypass, which is currently under construction, and continue south to approximately MP 17. US 93 is the primary transportation corridor that connects central Arizona to the northwestern regions of the state. It is the primary route for commercial and recreational traffic between the metropolitan areas of Phoenix and Las Vegas.

Currently, this segment of US 93 is a two-lane highway. US 93 carried heavy volumes of large commercial trucks, tractor-trailer combinations and recreational vehicle traffic, prior to travel restrictions being placed at the dam after Sept. 11, 2001. Once the Hoover Dam Bypass project is complete, the pre- 9/11/01 volumes of traffic will return to US 93. Because of the uneven terrain and lack of passing opportunities, frequently there are long lines of slow-moving traffic. The average daily traffic volume of 9,000 vehicles is estimated to nearly double in the next 20 years, reaching 17,000 vehicles. Upgrading the highway is needed to enhance safety, capacity, and operational characteristics. The main design alternatives are widening US 93 to the east, widening to the west, or the no-build alternative.

The study process is divided into two phases. The first phase consisted of scoping efforts, preliminary corridor alternatives development, and an overview of the environmental resources/constraints. A public information meeting was held in Dolan Springs, AZ, on May 22, 2002, to present the results of the corridor analysis and environmental overview to residents, businesses, and public agencies. The meeting also provided an opportunity for the study team to gain input from those in attendance regarding the corridor.

It was concluded that widening within the existing US 93 corridor would be the most successful at minimizing harm to the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, while adequately meeting the geometric and constructability requirements. While a few of the other corridor alternatives offered some advantages related to roadway geometrics or construction costs, these advantages did not outweigh the increase in environmental disturbance associated with these corridors. The recommendation to use the existing corridor was documented in a Feasibility Report dated June 2002.

Phase 2, which is underway, will develop and evaluate design alternatives within the existing corridor, along with the no-build alternative. This phase will include the preparation of technical reports and the detailed assessment of potential environmental impacts. The process also will include a public information meeting on April 30 and a formal public hearing this fall. A Design Concept Report and Environmental Assessment will document the results of Phase 2. The study is scheduled for completion in early summer of 2004.

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

Improvements to US 93
Hoover Dam to Milepost 17
Lake Mead National Recreation Area
April 30, 2003 • 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.
Mt. Tipton School Gymnasium
16500 Pierce Ferry Road
Dolan Springs, AZ

The public is invited to attend a public information meeting to be held on Wednesday, April 30, 2003, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Representatives from AMEC Infrastructure, Inc., prime consultant for the study, and ADOT will discuss various design alternatives. The presentation will begin at 6:15 p.m. and will be followed by a question-and-answer session. Residents and businesses are encouraged to attend the meeting to review and provide feedback on the design alternatives.

For additional meeting information, contact
Sara James, StarTangle, LLC, Community Relations,
(928) 774-8344 or sjames@startangle.com.

Preserving the Lake Mead National Recreation Area

This project involves a segment of US Highway 93 that is within the Lake Mead National Recreation Area (LMNRA). Because this segment is park land, several screening criteria will be used to evaluate design alternatives. These criteria focus on preserving the environmental, cultural, and economic features of the LMNRA. The Federal Highway Administration and Arizona Department of Transportation aim to have minimal impact on the LMNRA.

Factors that will be considered in evaluating the design alternatives include roadway capacity, current design standards, and erosion and drainage. The ease of construction, which includes traffic control and access to park features, both during and after the construction, is another important consideration. Other factors include the number of wildlife crossings, the number of cultural resource sites impacted, and scenic impacts. Economic factors include construction cost and the extent of utility relocations required in each alternative.

Criteria also will address enhancement and mitigation opportunities, including wildlife movement, park features, and old road interpretation. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure that natural and cultural resources and associated values are restored, protected, and maintained. The National Park Service, Arizona Game and Fish Department, and the State Historic Preservation Office all will provide input into the decision-making process.

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